

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 2-3 are cancelled, claims 6-16 have been added, and claims 1 and 4-5 remain in this application as amended herein. Accordingly, claims 1 and 4-16 are submitted for the Examiner's reconsideration.

The present Amendment is submitted in place of the Amendment mailed November 12, 2004 which the Examiner deemed non-responsive and therefore was not entered. M.P.E.P. § 714.19(N).

In the November 12, 2004 Amendment, claims 1-5 were cancelled and new claims 6-19 were submitted in place thereof. The Examiner, in the Notice of Non-Responsive Amendment, contended that the newly submitted claims 6-19 were directed to an invention that was independent of or distinct from the originally claimed invention. During a March 18, 2005 telephone conference between the applicants' attorney and the Examiner, the Examiner indicated that a newly submitted Amendment would be considered responsive if the original independent claims (claims 1, 4 and 5) were retained and were amended to include the limitations previously set out in the corresponding claims of the November 12, 2004 Amendment.

Therefore, in the present Amendment, claims 1, 4 and 5 have been amended in the manner described above, and claims 2-3 have been cancelled. Further, because the November 12, 2004 Amendment was not entered, the new claims of the present Amendment are numbered 6-16.

It is therefore submitted that the present Amendment is responsive to the prior Office Action mailed August 11, 2004.

In the prior Office Action, claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rogers (U.S. Patent No. 6,018,719) in view of Suliman (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0053980). Claims 2-3 are

cancelled. It is submitted that the remaining claims are patentably distinguishable over the references.

The Rogers patent describes an electronic system for registering product transactions. A point of sale register and an associated bar code scanner receive registration information that is delivered to a local computer system located at the point of sale and stored in its database. As an example, a product serial number is entered, such as by scanning a serial number printed on the package of the product, and the local computer determines if the serial number is valid and, if so, updates the local database. (See Figs. 1 and 2; col. 3, lines 48-67; and col. 5, lines 9-12 and 61-67). The local computer is also linked to a central computer system and periodically transmits the verified product serial numbers and associated information to the central computer system in batches. (See Fig. 4; and col. 6, lines 38-48). As acknowledged by the Examiner, Rogers does not disclose or suggest transmission of a notice requesting that the purchaser provide comments on the product and does not disclose or suggest that such a notice is based on the information recorded in a recording device. Thus, Rogers is not at all concerned with transmitting questionnaires.

The Suliman application relates to the anonymous collection of product registration information from a consumer. A system receives the product registration information and a consumer identifier, stores the product registration information in a customer account associated with the consumer identifier, communicates the product registration information and the consumer identifier to a manufacturer of the product, and receives messages from the manufacturer regarding the product that may be transmitted to the consumer or stored in a mailbox that the consumer can access. (See Fig. 3; paragraphs [0028]-[0029], [0037]-[0040], [0064]-[0066] and [0068]-[0071]). The publication also describes that the registration system may

generate *post-purchase behavior and satisfaction* questionnaires, transmit the questionnaires to consumers, and transmit the response information for the questionnaires to the manufacturers. (See paragraph [0070]). However, the publication does not disclose or suggest receiving and storing purchaser responses to a questionnaire that is available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information. In fact, the responses to such a *post-purchase behavior and satisfaction questionnaire* would not provide useful information if the questionnaire were to be transmitted to the consumer at the time that the product was purchased and registered.

Neither Rogers nor Suliman suggests:

a questionnaire data storage unit operable to receive and store purchaser responses to a first questionnaire that is available to the purchaser at a time the purchaser provides the registration code and the purchaser information, to transmit a second questionnaire to the purchaser at a predetermined time subsequent to the receipt and storage of the registration code and purchaser information, and to receive and store purchaser responses to the second questionnaire

as called for in claim 1.

Further, Rogers is not at all concerned with transmitting questionnaires or responses thereto, and Suliman describes transmitting the response information for the questionnaires to the manufacturers but does not disclose or suggest combining the purchaser responses to the questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers and does not disclose or suggest outputting data based on the combined responses.

Neither Rogers nor Suliman suggests:

a questionnaire data processing unit operable to receive the stored purchaser information, registration code and customer identifier from said customer data

unit, to determine whether said questionnaire data storage unit is to transmit an interview questionnaire to the purchaser based on at least part of the purchaser information, to combine the purchaser responses to at least one of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire, and the interview questionnaire with responses obtained from other purchasers, and to output data based on the combined responses

as defined in claim 1.

It follows that neither Rogers nor Suliman, whether taken alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the combination recited in claim 1, and claim 1 is therefore patentably distinct and unobvious over the references.

Independent claim 4 relates to an information processing method that includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 1. It follows that claim 4 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references at least for the same reasons.

Independent claim 5 calls for a recording medium recorded with a computer readable program for carrying out the method of claim 4. Claim 5 is therefore patentably distinguishable over Rogers and Suliman at least for the same reasons.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is respectfully requested.

New claims 6-9 depend from claim 1. Therefore, each of claims 6-9 likewise defines a combination that is distinguishable over the references. Support for new claims 6-9 is found, e.g., in Fig. 1 and in paragraphs [0057]-[0080] of the specification.

Further regarding claim 7, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests converting the purchaser information, the registration code, or the customer identifier into another format.

Additionally, concerning claim 8, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests receiving a customer inquiry together with a customer identifier, neither reference discloses or suggests outputting a reply to the customer inquiry, and neither reference discloses or suggests storing the customer inquiry and the reply in association with the customer identifier.

Also, as to claim 9, neither Rogers nor Suliman discloses or suggests receiving a stored customer inquiry and reply, and neither reference discloses or suggests combining information based on the customer inquiry and the reply with other information based on other customer inquiries and replies.

New claims 10-12 depend from claim 4 and are distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons. Moreover, claim 10 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 7, claim 11 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 8, and claim 12 includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 9. Therefore, each claim is similarly supported, and each claim is further distinguishable over the cited art at least for the same reasons.

New claims 13-15 depend from claim 5 and are distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons. Moreover, claim 13 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 7, claim 14 includes limitations similar to those set out in claim 8, and claim 15 includes limitations similar to those recited in claim 9, and therefore each claim is similarly supported and is further distinguishable over the cited art at least for the same reasons.

New independent claim 16 defines an information processing system that includes the information processing apparatus defined in claim 1. Therefore, claim 16 is distinguishable over the references at least for the same reasons. Additionally, neither reference discloses or suggests

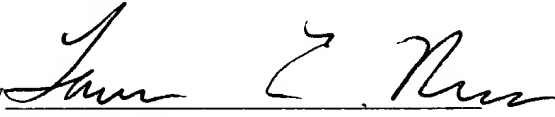
displaying a menu that permits purchasers to select between a menu item for registering a purchased product and a menu item for responding to a first questionnaire, as defined in claim 16.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which the Examiner might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Lawrence E. Russ
Registration No.: 35,342
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP
600 South Avenue West
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
(908) 654-5000
Attorney for Applicant